

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMCONSUL SAO PAULO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7801
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, BR
SUBJ: GALLUP POLLS GEISEL'S PRESTIGE AFTER APRIL CLOSING OF
CONGRESS

REF: SAO PAULO 0715

1. SUMMARY: A GALLUP POLL TAKEN IN RIO DE JANEIRO AND SAO PAULO
IN APRIL SHOWS PRESIDENT GEISEL'S PRESTIGE AT AN ALL TIME LOW,
APPARENT ALIENATION OF THE WEALTHIER, YOUNGER, MOST HIGHLY EDUCATED
ELEMENTS OF THE POPULATION WITH RESPECT TO RECENT GOVERNMENT ACTIONS
AND INCREASING SYMPATHY FOR THE MDB. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENT GEISEL'S PRESTIGE IN SAO PAULO AND RIO HAS FALLEN
CONSTANTLY IN THE LAST TWO AND A HALF YEARS. HERE IS THE MOST
RECENT GALLUP SOUNDING ON THE MATTER, TAKEN IN THE SECOND
WEEK OF APRIL, ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION, "IS THE PRESIDENT GOVERNING..
..

	VERY WELL	OK	BAD	VERY NO	RELATIVE
	WELL		BAD	OPINION	INDEX
SAO PAULO	12	39	23	7 5 14	16

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RIO DE JANEIRO 22 41 19 3 4 11 37

THE RELATIVE INDEX IS OBTAINED BY SUBTRACTING THE LAST THREE
RESPONSES (OK IS COUNTED AS A HIDDEN NEGATIVE RESPONSE) FROM
THE FIRST TWO. THE RELATIVE INDEX FOR GEISEL'S PRESTIGE IN SAO
PAULO IN 1975 WAS 51, IN 1976, 38. THE FIGURES FOR RIO ARE 58 AND
54, RESPECTIVELY. THE MOST RECENT POLL REPRESENTS A SHARP DROP

IN THE PRESIDENT'S POPULARITY, PRESUMABLY AS A RESULT OF GEISEL'S CLOSING CONGRESS AND DECREETING OF ELECTORAL CHANGES IN APRIL. IN MARCH HIS RELATIVE POPULARITY INDEX WAS 20 IN SAO PAULO AND 41 IN RIO.

3. PUBLIC OPINION ALSO APPEARS TO BE UNDERGOING SLOW ALIENATION WITH RESPECT TO THE GOVERNMENT AND TO THE EFFICACY OF THE VOTE. THOSE WHO THOUGHT THEIR VOTE MEANINGFUL IN SAO PAULO CONSTITUTED 84 PERCENT OF THE RESPONDENTS IN 1975 AND 74 PERCENT IN APRIL; THE FIGURES IN RIO DROPPED FROM 81 PERCENT IN 1975 TO 57 PERCENT IN APRIL. THE MOST POPULAR RESPONSE OF THOSE PERSONS WHO DID NOT THINK THEIR VOTE WAS MEANINGFUL WAS THAT THE PRESIDENT DOES WHATEVER HE WANTS TO DO REGARDLESS OF THE VOTE. THUS TREND APPLIES TO CONGRESS AS WELL. THE RELATIVE INDEX OF PUPULAR PRESTIGE OF THE CONGRESS (ACCORDING TO THE METHODOLOGY DESCRIBED ABOVE) FELL IN SAO PAULO FROM MINUS 6 IN JANUARY TO MINUS 32 IN APRIL; IN RIO THE FIGURES ARE FROM PLUS 5 IN JANUARY TO MINUS 3 IN APRIL. THE STRONGEST ALIENATION WAS EVIDENT AMONG THE WEALTHIEST, YOUNGEST AND BEST EDUCATED GROUPS.

4. WITH RESPECT TO THE CLOSING OF CONGRESS AND SUBSEQUENT DECREES CHANGING THE ELECTORAL AND JUDICIAL SYSTEMEGN LESS THAN HALF THE PEOPLE ARE AWARE OF THEM. THE DECREES THAT HAD THE GREATEST POPULAR PENETRATION WERE THE ONES USED BY THE GEISEL ADMINISTRATION TO GAIN POPULARITY -- 30 DAY VACATIONS FOR WORKERS AND CHANGES IN THE RENT LAW. AWARENESS OF OTHER MEASURES FELL BELOW AN AVERAGE OF 35 PERCENT. THE PRESIDENT'S TELEVISED SPEECH ANNOUNCING THE CLOSING OF CONGRESS REACHED ABOUT 37 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION IN SAO PAULO, 26 PERCENT IN RIO. THE MDB'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REBUTTAL, PUBLISHED IN THE PRESS, REACHED ONLY 6 PERCENT IN SAO PAULO AND RIO. ACCORDING TO GALLUP, THE BASIC THEMES IN THE TWO DECLARATIONS WERE "TRANQUILITY" -- GEISEL -- AND "LIBERTY" -- THE MDB. IN A POLL TAKEN ON MAY 1, GALLUP ASKED THE PEOPLE TO CHOOSE WHICH OF THE TWO BRAZIL NEEDS MOST. IN SAO PAULO, 38 PERCENT CHOSE TRANQUILITY WHILE 35 CHOSE LIBERTY. RESPONSES IN RIO WERE 35 PERCENT AND 29 PERCENT RESPECTIVELY. HOWEVER, IN SAO PAULO YOUNG MEN IN THE UPPER INCOME GROUPS, WITH SECONDARY OR UNIVERSITY EDUCATION, AND FAVORING THE MDB, WERE PREDOMINATLY IN FAVOR OF LIBERTY OVER TRANQUILITY. THE LOCUS OF SUPPORT IN SAO PAULO FOR THE GOVERNMENT WAS AMONG WOMEN OF THE LOWER-MIDDLE AND LOWER CLASSES WITH PRIMARY EDUCATION, AND FAVORING ARENA. THE BREAKDOWN WAS DIFFERENT IN RIO. THERE, THE DESIRE FOR TRANQUILITY WAS AMONG UPPER CLASS, MIDDLE AGE WOMEN, REGARDLESS OF EDUCATION OR PARTY PREFERENCE. UPPER CLASS YOUNG MEN, WHO FAVOR THE MDB, OPTED FOR LIBERTY. FINALLY, ASKED WHO SHOULD MAKE THE LAWS, TWO THIRDS OF THE RESPONDENTS IN SAO PAULO THOUGHT THE PEOPLE SHOULD PARTICIPATE. 17 PERCENT IN SAO PAULO AND 28 PERCENT IN RIO THOUGHT THE PRESIDENT SHOULD MAKE LAWS BY HIMSELF.

5. THE MDB HAS BEEN THE IMMEDIATE BENEFICIARY OF THE GOVERNMENT'S CLOSING OF CONGRESS AND THE RESULTING DECREES. 41 PERCENT OF THE RESPONDENTS IN SAO PAULO SAID THEY NOW REGARDED THE MDB WITH GREATER SYMPATHY; 35 PERCENT IN RIO AGREED.

6. COMMENT: OPINION POLLS ON A SERIES OF QUESTIONS THIS COMPLEX AND ABSTRACT ARE DIFFICULT IN BRAZIL BECAUSE OF THE GREAT DISPARITIES BETWEEN RICH AND POOR, EDUCATED AND ILLITERATE. POLLSTERS ALSO HAVE TO HANDLE THE DIFFICULT PROBLEM OF RESPONDENTS' SUSPECTING THAT THEY REALLY REPRESENT THE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES, SO RESPONDENTS AVOID GIVING NEGATIVE ANSWERS TO DIRECT QUESTIONS.

7. EMBASSY CONCURS.
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